

SHILOH

It is pertinent to draw our attention from the onset that the discourse on “SHILOH” does not intend to discuss the ‘excavators’ views or historical discoveries about Shiloh. We will concern ourselves mainly with the spiritual implications of Shiloh.

According to the book of Judges, chapter twenty-one, verse nineteen, Shiloh was said to be located on the north side of Bethel, it was on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Schechem and on the south of Lebanon. It’s military and religious importance in those days when Israel was led by Judges and kings cannot be over emphasized.

Israel subdued the town Shiloh after they arrived Canaan – the “Promised Land”. It was then made the base for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Hosts. The tabernacle of the God of Israel was therefore built in Shiloh. It became the place where the congregation of the children of Israel assembled together to worship God. It was therefore a Key religious center.

Joshua 18:1 says,

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there.....”

Since it was a religious center, God’s presence was at Shiloh. The book of Jeremiah, chapter seven verse twelve in part confirms this when it says,

“But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first,”

It seems that Shiloh and its suburbs were populated with disciplined young girls. They were virgins and good dancers. Some of the Israelites having observed those virtues in the lives of these young girls forcefully took them as wives. The Benjamites in particular were married to the Shilohites. In Judges Chapter twenty-one, verses twenty to twenty-three, the Bible says,

“Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards. And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, be favorable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty. And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.”

This aspect is very important because we cannot talk of Israel without reference to their early history. It could also be one of the reasons why God became interested in the city of Shiloh.

As earlier stated, the tabernacle of the Ark of covenant of the Lord of Hosts was located in Shiloh. By implication, the priests and prophets of the living God lived there. The Lord of Hosts was uniquely enthroned upon the Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh. This means the Ark not only symbolized the presence of God, it is unequivocally perceived as the seat of the power of God and the throne of the Yahweh of Judah. It was extremely revered. You will not understand the importance of Shiloh to the Israelites at that time except you appreciate the point made supra.

The Lord of Hosts refers to the God of the armies of Israel. The phrase further means the God of the Heavenly Hosts. It also means the God of the heaven and the earth. In the days of the Judges, it was believed that God can be met at the sanctuary in Shiloh. This is the reason why it became both the military and religious center for the tribes of Israel.

Over time, it became conventional that yearly, the entire tribes of Israel will assemble at Shiloh to meet with the priest and to worship the Lord of Hosts.

Therefore, Shiloh was a place where sacrifices were made unto the living God.

“And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.” 1 Samuel 1:3

Shiloh was seen as the house of the Lord. Offerings of the people were yearly sent there. It was a place where people come to empty themselves. The priests offered sacrifices for the atonement of the sins of the people. It was also a place of prayer. All the burdens of life were emptied there in the presence of God. In such meetings, the Lord of Host always intervened in the affairs of men bringing succor and relief to many of his people like Hannah.

Whenever the kings wanted to know the mind of God, it was the place they ran to. King Jeroboam once sent his wife to the prophet at Shiloh to find out what will become of his son and his throne.

1 Kings 14:1 – 14 says,

“At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of

Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were set by reason of his age. And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman. And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet as she came in at the door, that he said, come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.

Go, tell Jeroboam... Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes, But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back. Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone...."

The scriptures had to be extensively reproduced because they revealed what Shiloh stood for.

The king sent his wife to Shiloh to find out the mind of God about his house. God revealed amongst other things that Jeroboam's wife feigned to be another woman. They thought they could deceive the prophet of God. They were hypocrites. In Acts of the Apostles chapter five, verses one to ten, Ananias and Sapphira (husband and wife) like

Jeroboam and his wife indulged in hypocrisy and the LORD of hosts slayed them. You cannot come to Shiloh as a pretender without being exposed. You cannot deceive God. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:19,

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

At Shiloh it does not matter whether the prophet of God is physically blind, provided he has a right standing with God, he will search out your heart. The Lord is the God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed. 1Sam2:3 says **“Talk no more so exceeding proudly, let not arrogancy come out of your mouth, for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him are actions weighed.”**

The Bible says in Psalm 139:2

“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.”

Shiloh is a place of judgment. Sinners are not spared. God is not a respecter of any person. It does not matter whether you are a priest, prophet or a king or an ordinary member of the household of Israel. Once you are a sinner and you fail to repent, judgment will be pronounced. Jeroboam was judged instantly. God said he will bring evil upon him and his house will be utterly cut off. Eli and his sons were also judged.

1 Samuel 2:27-30 say,

“And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

The Bible tells us that a son should honor his father and a servant ought to fear his master. If truly you are a son of God, you must not despise the name of God and things of God. You must honor God with your body being the temple of God. You must honor God in your service. Don't use your title for personal gains. Don't take advantage of the unprotected members of the body of Christ. Avoid every appearance of evil. Don't encourage evil transactions or business, oppressive rules, regulation, laws and / or communication either at home or at place of work.

Shiloh is a place where genuine servants of God are acknowledged. In 1 Kings 14:8, the Bible affirmed that David kept the commandments of God. It further asserted that David followed God with all his heart and did that which was right in the eyes of God. Hannah was said not to be a daughter of Belial. That could not be said of Hophni and Phinehas referred to as priests of the Lord in 1 Samuel 1:3. Sometimes some leaders in the Church position people that are more loyal to them than God. They use such brethren to achieve their personal ambitions and victimize those who objectively do not agree with them.

The Bible tells us in 1 Samuel 2:12 that the sons of Eli were sons of Belial and they never knew God.

"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD."

Verse seventeen of the same chapter reveals that their sins were very great. They made men to abhor the offering of the Lord. They were also disobedient to the warning of their father.

Children who are brought up in Shiloh are disciplined. They are usually God fearing. The book of Judges speaks of the young virgins in and around Shiloh. How many of our brothers and sisters in the church still preserve their virginity before marriage today? Samuel at Shiloh grew in wisdom of God and men. Are our children growing in wisdom of God? How many of them are in favor with God? What do we read and hear of our children in the higher institutions? Most of them join secret cults. Some are drug addicts and smokers. Most of our female children are doing petty prostitution. Their life styles are devoid of those of the daughters of Sarah. Some wear the appearance of Jezebel. However, in the mix of all these, there are still God fearing brethren.

Shiloh is a place of mercy. Hannah in her affliction was remembered by God in Shiloh. The Lord heard her prayers and showed her mercy. The Lord will show you mercy in Jesus name. He will hear your prayers in Jesus' name.

Shiloh is a place where prophecies come from the throne of grace to comfort the afflicted and the oppressed. Hannah went to Shiloh with a troubled heart. The man of God prophesied peace unto her situation. The peace of the Lord came upon her. 1 Samuel 1:17-18 say,

“Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. The Lord will replace your sorrow and troubled emotions with his peace and joy in Jesus' name.

Shiloh is a place where reproach in one's life is removed. It is a place where barrenness is cured. Hannah went to Shiloh with the reproach of barrenness. At Ramathaim-Zophim, she was a proverbial barren house wife of Elkanah. The second wife of her husband Elkanah and her children called her all sorts of names. By the time she came back from Shiloh her story had changed. She went weeping but came back with a psalm in her lips. In 1 Samuel 1:27 she gave her testimony.

“For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him”.

If you go to Shiloh with the right mind, the Lord will also give you astounding testimony in Jesus name. Amen.

Shiloh is also a place where children of God make vows. The Bible tells us that Hannah vowed a vow unto the Lord of hosts. She called on God to remember her. By reason of her vow, she experienced an open heaven.

Shiloh is a place where we demonstrate faithfulness and faith in God. Abraham after receiving the promised son, willingly offered him back to God. After God gave Samuel to Hannah, she redeemed her vow without delay. She never bothered it was the only son. In the fullness of time, she lent the baby back to the Lord in accordance with her vow.

Numbers 30:2 says,

“If a man vows a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”

Have you made any vow unto the living God either to serve him or to offer him something? Please redeem your vow like Hannah did. 1 Samuel 1:27 -28 revealed the faithfulness of Hannah. Eli acknowledged this in 1 Samuel 2:20 when he blessed Elkanah and his wife Hannah. As a result of her faithfulness the Lord gave her more children.

“And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.”

No wonder Hannah composed a song of psalm as a spontaneous response of her heart to God for His graciousness. This is why I call it **“the vow that opened heaven.”**

Shiloh is a place where children hear the voice of the Lord. You will not hear the voice of the Lord if you are not a son. At a tender age, God called Samuel and he heard the voice of the Lord. He acknowledged his servant-ship unto the Lord. God informed him what he intended to do in Israel.

The Bible says in Amos 3:7,

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

Instructions come from masters to their servants. It is not the other way round. Until you have a servant attitude, you are not likely to hear God. Classified information is for the humble and submissive children of God. The Bible tells us that Samuel grew before the Lord. The book of 2 Peter 3:18 says,

“... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...”

Some children of this generation prefer worldly novels, films and secular calling to the things of God. To be carnally minded is death. The carnal mind is not rich towards God. It is for the same reason they are not friends of God. The Bible tells us that they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh but they that are after the spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Abraham was mindful of the spiritual things and God called him his friend. As a friend, God spoke to him about the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Unlike Samuel, many brethren no longer hear from God. God is not speaking to them because they are mindful of the worldly things. But if you come to Shiloh, you will hear the voice of the Lord like Samuel. God is in Shiloh, revealing his plans concerning you and the universe.

Shiloh is a place of election. God decides who to use. He decides which position is for brother Peter or John. First Samuel 13:13 and 14 say,

“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”

The above scriptures revealed that as a result of the disobedience of king Saul, God chose another captain to lead his people. It was at Shiloh that the Lord elected Samuel. The Lord preferred Samuel because he was mindful of spiritual things. Hophni and Phinehas the sons of Eli were rejected because of their preference for meat, bread and women. God will not entrust spiritual things or leadership to a carnally minded Christian (though in

our present world, it is not uncommon to find worldly and carnal leaders in the pinnacle of the hierarchy of the Church of God.)

THE SHILOH OF OUR TIME

We still have Shiloh in our present age. But it is not symbolized by a particular town. It is the gathering of the children of God in designated places. Every mission has an annual or bi-annual, monthly or weekly program as the case may be whereby all its members and guests assemble. In some missions, it is called annual convention or conference. While in others, it is known as National Retreats. Such meetings are very unique. Everything about it is special. Brethren look forward with expectation to such meetings. Leaders of missions undertake an elaborate preparation for such meetings. Acknowledged men of God are used. There is always a long period of prayer and fasting before the actual date. Members from all works of life go to the arena and settle there during such programs.

On such meetings, God visits his people in a grand style. We hear of amazing miracles. It is a healing venue for longstanding afflictions. Prayers are answered by fire. The word of God is taught the people. It is always a soul-searching meeting for the serious minded Christians. The Lord rebukes and corrects his people. People readily repent of their sins in order to avert God's judgment. The foolish ones won't repent and they leave there with the judgment of God hanging on their neck. When David sinned, he repented and he was forgiven. Eli never repented. He said he is God; let him do what pleases him. God judged him and his children. Elections, which come in form of ordination, are made on such occasions. The spiritual minded brethren like Samuel are lifted up. The barren is given fruit of the womb. Peace is given to the troubled hearts. And the faithful brethren like Hannah who redeemed her vows, are rewarded.

In such meetings brethren praise and worship God for what He did in the previous meetings or years. They also reassure God of their commitment to serve Him in the

subsequent years. The LORD of hosts is in Shiloh. There is nothing you cannot get from Him. He is Jehovah El-Shaddai, the all sufficient God.

Don't fail to go to Shiloh.

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